The Seed Sower.

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The Ladder of Truth.

Sin, justice, fear, an angry Judge—with these we are on the lowest round of the ladder of truth.
How long the world dwelt there, and how many still look back regretful to those days!
One step higher and we find forgiveness and a Father.
For most men that is the last word, but we must press upward.
Beyond fatherhood and brotherhood we grope toward organic oneness—we dimly feel that God is palpitating, all-embracing love.

Truth Again.

Secrete truth in your intellect, and you will find it a heavy burthen.
There it will only cloy and glut and obstruct.
Truth is not food for knowledge but for life.
You must love the truth and feel the truth and assimilate the truth.
What you need is not truth known but truth lived.
Truth cannot be stored away without ceasing to be truth;
It cannot be idle without becoming a lie.

Love's Blindness.

Love is blind? Oh, miraculous blindness,
Whose insight is touched from above
With the zest of divine loving-kindness!
He sees best who is deepest in love.

ERNEST CROSBY.

The Simplification of Religion.

A SERMON,

BY THE REV. AMBROSE BENNETT, M.A.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—MICAH vi. 8.

I suppose few sentences in the Old Testament are better known than this sentence of the prophet Micah, few are more frequently quoted. The words contain, it is often said, a very simple and yet very complete designation of the essence of true religion. They define, in a few plain words, the secret of true worship. Again and again, in the midst of discussions and arguments concerning the truths of religion, when contending parties have been battling for this or that favourite position, when they have striven as to what should rightly be thought about doctrine or ceremonial, there have always been those who wished to cut all the discussion of these matters short with the question, sometimes impatiently put, "After all, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

Now, this utterance of the prophet is truly a great utterance. It is impossible to find anywhere in the Old Testament a nobler explanation of the way of life which God requires of His people, a nobler explanation of the means by which they may worship Him aright. I suppose that a good many would say of this utterance that its great virtue lies in its simplicity. It simplifies religion. It strips it clear of all complexities and confusions, and conveys its essence in the briefest and plainest terms. Fatigued, as we sometimes are, with our individual efforts in search of truth, weary of endless discussions and various controversy, we fall back with glad relief upon these words in all their clearness and directness. We welcome them because of their simplicity.

It may be of some service if we try for a few moments to understand this simplicity, to understand, *i.e.*, how far the words really are simple words, and how far it is true to say that the prophet Micah, in declaring that what God requires of us is to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before Him, *simplifies* religion for us.

Let us first recall in what connection he introduces the saying. It occurs in a passage of very earnest exhortation to his people to turn from shadows to realities, to cease from their infatuated dependence upon idle forms and mechanical ceremonies, and come to see that they do not touch the root of the matter, which lies in conduct and in conduct alone. He beseeches them to recognise that religion is neither a mechanical round of sacrifices nor any sudden state of ecstasy or enthusiasm. He bids them see that religion is rational intercourse and loving duty between God and man. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" he asks. "Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

His object is evidently to direct them into the proper quarter for finding the essence of true worship, to turn their attention from things merely external, like sacrificial ceremonies, to that which was internal, that condition of the heart which would issue in the doing of justice and mercy, and the maintenance of humility before God. And you observe he puts the question, "What doth the Lord require of thee?" Evidently for him the answer to that question settles the whole matter. Let us know what God requires of us, what He demands from us, and we know all that we need to know. The essence of religion is discovered to us if we have acquainted ourselves with the commandments of the Most High. I suppose, therefore, that when we say that the prophet simplifies religion in the utterance of the text, we really mean that he does so because he tells us in a few unmistakable words just what it is that we must do in order that we may please God. He sets down in direct terms what are the requirements of God, and leaves us in no doubt at all as to what our conduct must be like.

But now I ask you to reflect a moment on that statement. "The prophet simplifies religion because he tells us just what it is that God requires of us." Is it always a fact that religion is simplified for us when we learn what God wants of us? Does it simplify matters in very truth to know that conduct is the essential thing in life, that rightness of conduct is the prime demand of the Most High? I think that we shall all confess that there is a very real sense in which this does not simplify religion, but introduces a new difficulty and a new complexity.

There are indeed two senses which we may give to the expression, the simplification of religion. The prophet Micah, for example, in making this declaration, did in one sense simplify religion for the people of Judah, but in another sense he did exactly the reverse of this. When he set out clearly the true idea of religion, when he defined it as not existing in elaborate sacrifices and ceremonial, and shewed that these were only accessories and not essentials, when he insisted on the sovereign importance of right conduct, he was simplifying matters. He was making it easier for the people's minds to grasp. He drew a clear dividing line between what God required as essential and what was not essential. He made it clear that religion did not lie in the fulfilment of a number of complex duties, and did not consist in rising into some rare

ecstatic condition. With absolute distinctness he affirmed that it consisted in the practice of justice and mercy and humility before God. Thus he simplified matters, because he gave them clear ideas, easy to apprehend, easy to seize and possess. In this sense, therefore, he simplified religion: made it easy for the intellect, made it plain to the understanding.

But in another sense it must be said that he did not simplify religion. Religion is not merely something for the intellect to grasp, for the understanding to take hold of. It is also something which concerns the will, which must move the will and bend it and determine it. Religion is not so many ideas dwelling in the mind as people dwell in a house, it is something that must dwell in us as the blood dwells in our bodies. Religion is not merely the seeing and knowing of what God requires of us; it is the actual doing and fulfilling of those requirements. It is not merely the being able to see where truth lies; it is the incorporation of truth within ourselves so that we eat its flesh and drink its blood. The prophet told the people of Judah that the essence of religion did not lie in sacrifices, but in doing justice and mercy. Well, that God requires mercy and not idolatrous sacrifices is a much purer idea, it is much simpler and easier to understand. But, when we pass from considering it as an idea to be understood to an action that has to be done, do we find that the matter is simplified? On the contrary, it is made harder. It is easier to offer the sacrifice of rams, easier to offer the rivers of oil, than to do justly and love mercy. It is easier to fulfil punctually a whole round of ceremonial observance, even so complex as that which the Jewish system prescribed, than to overcome self-will and to replace the heart's native self-assertiveness with humility before God.

Thus, in cutting away all external and foreign matters and bringing down religion to the simple ground of righteous conduct before God, in one sense he made things easier, but in another he made them harder. He gave the understanding something plainer to grasp, but to the will he gave something harder to grapple with. He set a harder and more complicated task in limiting the requirements of God to the doing of justice and mercy in humbleness of heart.

Now, of course, it is a great thing to have religion simplified. It is often said that a simple Christianity is one of the chief needs of our time, and on many sides one hears the cry for the simplification of Christian truth. Let us be quite sure what we mean when we ask for this. How is Christianity simplified for us? By what means can it be done? How shall we know when it has been done?

(1) We may say, I think, that Christianity has been simplified for us when we have come to see that the essence of it lies in Christian living: when we have come to see that whatever our forms and ceremonies, or whatever our lack of forms and ceremonies, whatever our system of doctrine, if it does not conduce to and end in Christian living, then it is not true Christianity. When we have come to see that God does not require of us to accept as true propositions which, using our reason humbly and reverently, and with due teachableness, we cannot see as otherwise than untrue—untrue for us, that is. When we have come to see that ceremonies are not of first importance, that in so far as they assist to the cultivation of Christian character they are valuable and to be encouraged, but in so far as they do not assist to this they are valueless and vain. When we have come to see that the end of Christianity is the putting on of Christ, the passionate endeavour to press after the stature of his fulness, when that one definite goal stands clear and distinct before us, then Christianity has been simplified for us. Simplified, *i.e.*, for the perceiving mind, for the understanding. An unclouded image of it is presented to the intellect. It offers a simple idea, a simple object of thought.

(2) But there is another aspect of the matter. Christianity as an idea, as an exercise for the intellect, is made easier to grasp, it is easier to understand. But Christianity as *a task for the will*, as a life to be lived, as an idea to be carried out and incarnated, that is not made easier. When we learn that true religion is not the assent of the mind to certain theological statements, but the assent of the heart to the will of God, we learn that religion is not simple, but is harder than we thought before. When we learn that Christianity is not the performance of certain approved rites and observances, but the practice of justice and mercy and the fulfilment of the law of Christ, we

learn that we have a more arduous and more complex task before us than we had at first imagined. Christianity is not made into a simple thing, nay, its difficulties are intensified.

For what does experience tell us? What do the lessons of all the years we have lived, with their varying tale of joy and sorrow, of success and failure, of hope and disappointment, contain? Is there not one lesson which we have all learnt, learnt oftentimes with painful awakening and with stress of soul—the lesson, viz., that it is one thing to know with our understanding just what it is that God requires of us, and wholly another thing to give up heart and will utterly to obedience to what He requires and the fulfilment of His commands? It is a great thing to have answered the question which the prophet put and answered, "What doth the Lord require of thee?" and that the answer should be simple and direct and plain to the meanest intelligence. It is a great thing, but it is not enough. Nay, when we have got that answer we do but stand at the threshold of the religious life. Power to do what God requires of us, power so to bend the stubborn heart and will that they shall give immediate assent to His commands, immediate submission to His decrees. That is the supreme need of life, that is the urgent want which presses as with the sense of physical hunger upon our frail humanity. And until religion is giving us that power, until we are getting from it what supplies the want and satisfies the need, we have not simplified religion. However plain and brief may be the idea, the intellectual idea of it we may possess, still as a practical reality it is beset with confusions and overlaid with complexities.

None of us finds it an easy thing, a simple thing, to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God. Who of us finds it easy to do justly day by day? A thousand opportunities come to us every day for the practice of justice, not merely in the more obvious ways of uprightness in business and the fulfilment of our civic duties, but justice in our thoughts and our words, justice to the people with whom we live, justice in the thoughts we cherish about them, in the words we speak to them, justice to those whom we do not like, for whom we feel some antipathy, justice to those who differ from us in many thoughts and ways, or to those who have wronged us, or to those we have wronged. A thousand opportunities for doing justly in such ways come to everyone of us every day. Who of us has a clean sheet to show as to our fulfilment of these opportunities? Who of us has found this practical and detailed realisation of God's requirements a matter of ease and simplicity?

In one sense it is a glad thing to know that we can please God by walking humbly before Him. It rids us of many confused ideas. But there is another sense in which it must be said that we cannot hail that piece of knowledge with gladness. When we examine ourselves, when we reflect upon the manner of life which we too often pursue, when we reflect that again and again we have found it supremely difficult, have found it constantly beyond our power, to walk humbly with God, then it is rather with some sense of sorrow that we remember that this is what God requires of us. What is it to walk humbly with God? It is to bow before Him as the only Wise and the only True. It is to lay our proud wills at His feet. It is to declare of whatsoever He lays upon us, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." It is to accept His law, not with sullen and grim submission, but with free and quiet joyfulness; it is, as Dante said, to make His will our peace. But this is no easy matter; it is a task of infinite hardness, and the way to its attainment is a way of toilsomeness and endurance. When the hour of misfortune strikes for us, when circumstances rise up to baffle and thwart our cherished dreams and confident hopes, to receive it all with patient humbleness, to suffer no outcry of complaint to escape us, to stifle every thought of bitterness, every suggestion of impatience, and thus to walk humbly before Him in Whose hands is the disposal of our life,—this is anything but easy, this is anything but a simple matter. And we do but trifle with serious realities when we represent it as such.

Religion is not truly simplified for us until it is giving us the power to do these hard things, and do them so constantly and persistently that at last we find them hard no longer and they begin to become easy. The prophets of the Old Testament did a mighty work for mankind when they tore asunder the confusions with which earlier generations had covered the truth of God. They wrought splendidly in disentangling the essence of God's law, and shewing us that in justice and

mercy and humility lay its fulfilment. But there was needed a greater work than theirs. There was needed something more than the enunciation of God's law, something more than the declaration that it is conduct which satisfies. Power to fulfil that law, strength to make that conduct a palpable reality—that was the need which it was for others than the prophets to supply. It is not until we enter the New Testament and awake to the revelation it contains that we come upon the sources of that power. There in that unique life which is the animating soul of the New Testament, in that unexampled character, in the supreme victory of the Cross, we come upon a new and living way opened for us, a way to the power we seek, a way to obedience and submission, a way to the cheerful accomplishment of whatsoever Almighty God requires of us. The simplification of Christianity, which is only, in other words, the making possible the practical realisation of the Christian life, lies in the acceptance of that way. Christianity is simplified for none of us while our thirst for reconciliation with God, provoked by the pressure of our knowledge of His law and our powerlessness to fulfil it, remains unsatisfied. But "if any man is in Christ he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." It is because Christ reconciles that he simplifies, and hides from the wise and understanding what he reveals unto babes.

Ethics; or, Religion and Ethics?

"Happy is he who is pure in life *and* religious in soul."

So Euripides wrote in one of his finest plays —the *Bacchæ*. That sentence is in entire harmony with the Gospel, if we substitute "blessed" for "happy," and contains deeper wisdom than any attempt to divorce Religion from Ethics, which is practically the same thing as removing the foundations on which the whole building is erected.

The rise of several Ethical Societies of late years in this country and in America cannot be regarded without some anxiety. Even if we hold that like all similar attempts to dispense with Religion and supersede the Gospel of Christ, they will sooner or later come to nothing. The misfortune is that they are leading away from us many of our young people of considerable culture whom the coldness of our services and, in some cases, the controversial hardness and antagonism of preaching, have alienated from our churches. They carry with them, I doubt not, some at least of the religious influences in which they were nurtured. But it is sad to think of what may be the ultimate history of a generation which has been brought up under purely Ethical influences, and knows nothing of the lofty ideals of a true religious faith.

Can we separate Religion from Ethics? Can Morality—as distinct from mere prudential self-interest—exist in any genuine and noble form apart from religious faith, high hope, devout reverence, lofty aspiration after the ideal life in God? This question has excited much discussion of late years, and is answered in the affirmative by many persons for whose character and abilities I have nothing but the greatest respect. Let them try the experiment without let or hindrance except from fair discussion. I do not for a moment deny that an Atheist, or one who in his natural reaction from unworthy views of God, imagines himself an Atheist, may be a person of irreproachable morality, and throughout his whose life may be actuated by a noble and disinterested enthusiasm in the service of humanity. What is termed Atheism is often nothing more than a suspense of faith, and should rather be termed Non-Theism. I knew the late Charles Bradlaugh, and admired his strenuous struggle for what he believed to be right and true. I rejoice that my old and honoured acquaintance, G. J. Holyoake, is still in the land of the living, as active as ever in his green old age in labours for the good of humanity, especially of those who are down-trodden and forgotten. There are Agnostics, Positivists, Humanitarians, and the like who profess to have entirely rejected belief in God and Immortality, and to have outgrown the "outworn superstitions of all creeds." Nevertheless without faith and reverence for a higher power with Whom we can hold spiritual communion, the Everliving God, Who is infinite Goodness, Wisdom, Love, they cannot but miss that higher conception of *Duty* which is involved in the religious idea of our common brotherhood as the offspring of one Universal Father. The great novelist who styled

herself "George Eliot," is reported to have said that of God, Immortality, Duty, there remains only the last. The late brilliant essayist, F. W. Myers, in an article published some years ago in the *Century Magazine*, wrote:—"I remember how at Cambridge I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity on an evening of a rainy day in May, and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet calls of men—the words God, Immortality, Duty—pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third." We have a melancholy illustration in one unfortunate episode in the life-history of the great novelist, that when faith in the God of Righteousness and the great hope of personal Immortality are lost the chief inspiration to Duty has gone with them. "Our greatest hope is greatest memory" are, I believe, words that are inscribed on George Eliot's tomb at her own request, and they simply mean that life is without hope of the future. Although there are high-minded persons who can work steadily on for the good of their fellow-beings without thought or hope of a future life, the multitude—*pace* Huxley—will act on the old epicurean saying, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

Apart from a belief in God, whence can we derive the obligations of Duty? Whatever philosophical or Ethical systems you attempt to lean on you will find, as that devout Theist, Mazzini, has said, that without God it has no other foundations than *force*—blind, tyrannical force. If there be not a holy inviolable law uncreated by man, what rule have we by which to judge whether a given act be just or unjust? In the name of whom or what shall we protest against iniquity and oppression? Without God, I repeat, there is no other rule than mere self-interest, a struggle for life in which the weakest goes to the wall without compassion, without human sympathy, or care. You talk in glowing language of a universal brotherhood. But why should we love each other as brethren if we are not children of one Universal Father? What claim have others upon me? "We are all encompassed with mystery, and harkening on, poor moths of a summer day, to final annihilation." It is a dreary outlook. Why should Ethical Societies be formed to desolate our already suffering humanity with such blank negations?

Let me add a few testimonies of some of the greatest thinkers of the age in favour of the principles I have presented, as positive and almost universal axioms, what I do not care to advocate by any mere dialectical proof.

"Evil must come upon us headlong if Morality tries to get on without Religion." So says Tennyson in a passage quoted in the Memoir, vol. 2, page 337.

Dr. Martineau, in a letter written January 13th, 1887, at the time when Ethical Societies were dividing the Unitarians of the West, says:—"I do not myself believe in the efficacy of purely Ethical communions: short of the enthusiasm of personal affection between the spirit of man and Spirit of God, the blending of Religion is not reached, and no permanent cohesion can be expected on the mere Ethical ground of relations between man and men." With characteristic fairness Dr. Martineau adds that "those who do not share this opinion are altogether in the right to try the experiment."

Froude, in his charmingly-written Memoir of John Bunyan ("English Men of Letters Series"), writes:—"So far as we yet know, Morality rests upon a sense of obligation; and obligation has no meaning except as implying a Divine command, without which it would cease to be." And again, in the same work: "A belief in a Supernatural Power [Person?] which has given us a law to live by and to which [whom] we are responsible for our conduct, has alone of all influences known to us succeeded in ennobling and elevating the character of man." It seems to me obvious that we can recognise no real moral responsibility to mere Power [which might be only mechanical] working by immutable *Law*, and therefore this passage from Froude implies that Power should also be a Living *Person*, to Whom alone we can hold ourselves accountable.

Finally, Coleridge, in his "Aids to Reflection," sums it all up when he says: "Morality is the body of which faith in Christ [or the religion of Christ] is the Soul." And in the same work Coleridge quotes the following striking passage from Seneca [Epistle 41] which contains deeper wisdom than all the treatises of the Ethical Societies:—"Ita dico, Lucili, sacer inter nos Spiritus sedet, malorum bonorum-

que nostrorum observator et custos. Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est."

I cannot but regret, therefore, the increasing spread of Ethical Societies, because, while admitting the high character and aims of their founders, I fear that if they last for a single generation we shall witness a growing deterioration of the ideal of character and conduct presented in the Sermon on the Mount, and pervading the whole of the New Testament. That Liberal Christians should embrace the Ethical persuasion seems to me to be passing into a distinctly lower level of thought and aspiration. All that is true and good in Ethical publications is borrowed directly from Christianity, and without it we have lost our noblest ideal of service, sacrifice, and aspiration.

I do not care to argue about these matters, or to attempt to prove them by logical processes, which seldom reach those who have given themselves up to the Spirit of Denial. They seem to me to be the primary truths of human consciousness, and I no more blame anyone who denies them than I should blame a blind man who cannot see the beauty and glory of this outer universe. Ethics and Religion seem to me to be one and inseparable, at least in reflective minds; and Law can only justify its supreme authority by being regarded as the Divine revelation of the inner meaning and purpose of the Universe. T. L. M.

Notes and Jottings.

The sudden illness of the King, and the consequent postponement of the Coronation, have furnished the text for a good many sermons. It is curious to notice how often it has been spoken of as a divine judgment. Men have seen in it the intervening finger of God, warning them to repent. This idea of spasmodic interferences, though it is so contrary to the deepest religious thought of our time, lingers long. It is a saddening revelation of the vast amount of unbelief in God in ordinary life.

There is still a very prevalent idea that men can hardly be religious and happy at the same time. Perhaps it hardly amounts to a belief that God is jealous of human happiness; but it leads to an unnatural emphasis upon disappointment and pain and sorrow, and to the ordinary mind gives them almost a monopoly of religious influence. At the same time it fosters the inclination to go far beyond the bounds of our knowledge in speaking about mysterious and startling events. This kind of familiarity has little in common with Christian piety. An honest confession of ignorance is often the truest reverence.

In this connection it may not be out of place to recall the advice of Lord Halifax, written more than two centuries ago. Like many lay sermons it is short, pithy, and to the point. "Take heed," he writes, "of running into that common error of applying God's judgments upon particular occasions. Our weights and measures are not competent to make the distribution either of His mercy or of His justice. He hath thrown a veil over these things, which makes it not only an impertinence, but a kind of sacrilege, for us to give sentence on them without His commission."

King's College, London, has abolished its religious tests for all teaching appointments except the theological professorships. What a change since the days of Frederick Denison Maurice! Dr. Wace, with refreshing consistency, has resigned his seat on the governing body of the College as a protest; but no one is alarmed. The Bishop of London defends the new policy, and the *Guardian* has discovered that the tests were without practical use, and often very inconvenient. "Those who accepted the test were not necessarily keen members of the Church, but simply men who did not feel obliged to reckon themselves as excluded from it." In other words, tests at King's College, as elsewhere, have excluded many men of strong religious earnestness, while they have been accepted and then treated with silent contempt by the practical agnostic.

We congratulate King's College on this victory of freedom and common-sense. But we must not exaggerate its importance. The hands of the committee seem to have been forced by the impossibility of full affiliation with the University of London while the tests were maintained. Their action throws a curious light upon

the determined effort that is being made by the Church party in the House of Commons to maintain an ideal of almost mediæval exclusiveness for the teaching profession. The arguments which we imagined had disappeared for ever with the abolition of University tests were revived with remarkable vigour in the recent debate upon Training Colleges. To the plea that all institutions supported by public funds should be freely open to all, or at least have the partial safeguard of a conscience-clause, no real reply was forthcoming, because none was possible. But the Government decided that for the present the Church of England is to have its own way in these matters, without any consideration of what is really required on grounds both of public justice and educational efficiency.

The seminarist, whether in the priesthood or the teaching profession, ought to be considered an anachronism. His knowledge of the world is confined entirely to his own set. His whole training sets both his intelligence and his sympathies into a narrow groove. On purely educational grounds there is every reason for throwing down the barriers and changing the teachers' seminary into a national institution. Considerations of an even more pressing kind were touched upon in the clear and broad-minded speech which Mr. George Harwood contributed to the debate. He referred to many cases in his own experience of students who had had to give up the career of teachers because they could not bring themselves to accept the prescribed test, while others had forced their conscience for the sake of the future, and the consequence had been to burn into their hearts hatred of the Church—not love of it. Speaking as a Churchman, he said that he did not believe it was at all necessary to segregate Churchmen in order to keep them Churchmen. The wise philosophy was to throw the door open and draw all people in. We shall have to wait for a wiser and less reactionary House of Commons before these words receive the attention they deserve. They express a truth of vital importance both for religion and for national life.

The death of Lord Acton will recall many memories in the minds of those who follow contemporary religious movements. The friend of Gladstone and Döllinger, he took an active part at the time of the Vatican Council and the old Catholic secession. He bowed to the inevitable, and never left the Catholic Church. Gladstone is said to have raised him to the peerage that he might represent educated Catholic opinion in the House of Lords. He was a man of colossal learning and most charming manners, and is said to have had no small influence on European politics behind the scenes. A writer in the *Athenæum* pronounces upon him this remarkable eulogy: "If there was an unique figure in Europe, it was Lord Acton. To combine the country squire, the peer of the realm, the Lord in Waiting to the Queen, the Professor of History at Cambridge, the profound lay theologian, was indeed a record, to which there is no parallel."

Professor James' "Gifford" Lectures have been looked for with great eagerness by many readers. They are now published in a volume, whose very appearance is inviting. "The Varieties of Religious Experience" is no technical book of philosophy, though it contains a good deal of hard thinking. It is a fascinating study by one of the greatest living psychologists of the facts of the religious consciousness. "The Religion of Healthy-Mindedness," "The Sick Soul," "The Value of Saintliness,"—these are the suggestive titles of some of the chapters. They are enough in themselves to send many readers to the book. We are sure they will not be disappointed.

Self-Denial.

Give up nothing so long as you can help giving it up.
Do not deny yourself until self insists on being denied.
Let the flood of rebellion against selfishness gather above the dam till it sweeps all before it.
Gorge yourself with quails until you loathe them.
When at last luxury and privilege and authority fill you with disgust,
Then seek out the poor, because you cannot do otherwise;
Become satisfied with your simple manhood, because you have learned that it is the sum of all possessions.

ERNEST CROSBY.

Art and Life.

DANTE.

Giotto and Dante are inseparable in my mind, and, having spoken of the former, I want to say something now of his friend. Cimabue may have been the means of their becoming acquainted. Cimabue, you know, was walking one day in the neighbourhood of Florence, in the fields near a village beyond Fiesole, and he found Giotto, who had charge of his father's sheep, trying to draw one of them with a stone on a slab of rock. He took him, with his father's consent, to Florence, and made him an artist. We may picture him in Cimabue's studio in the Glad Quarter learning to draw and to grind colours and to carve, and perhaps to work in metals also, for those great medieval workmen practised a number of the arts and not only one. Here he probably met Dante, who was a painter as well as a poet, and may have had lessons from the leading painter in the city. Dante was eleven years, according to another tradition one year, his senior. At any rate they were fellow-workers and friends together in Florence, then a grand old city, growing more beautiful every day, beautiful with walls and gateways and churches and bridges and stone and timber houses, squares and gardens, beautiful in ways we, with our iron-girder architecture, can scarcely understand. Compared with Florence, when Dante and Giotto lived and long after, our modern cities are vulgar monstrosities, excelling in drainage and lighting no doubt, but inferior in almost every other respect. It would be impossible for a Giotto or a Dante to develop his genius in Glasgow, Birmingham or London. Their artistic sense would be dulled and deadened by the blue-slated, ill-shapen shallow roofs, the straight characterless streets, the miles of shop fronts, which the walls above, without any visible support, threaten to crash through; the rows and rows of bare oblong holes, thousands often the same in shape and size, instead of casements and windows; the falsehoods abounding on every hand for ornament, arches bearing no weight (often without a keystone), gables without roof upon or behind them, fronts without backs, stucco partitioned to look like stone, deal grained to resemble oak, cast-iron coloured to pass for bronze, paper glazed to look like leaded glass, and multitudes of similar lies; and last, but not least, broad wall-spaces covered with bragging and shameless advertisements. Amid such trash and sham, such glaring and sordid self-seeking, such an absence of the corporate, civic spirit, Dante could not produce a Divine Comedy, nor Giotto a Campanile. To them it would have seemed strange to leave the city to find beauty, because the city in those days was so much more beautiful than the village. Now it is the opposite. When we want to see anything lovely, inspiring and restful, we fly to the woods and fields. Hence the one really supreme art of modern times is landscape.

Now Dante and Giotto were friends amid surroundings which stimulated their genius to the utmost. The frescoes and sculptures of Giotto are the best commentary I know on Dante's poetry, and to understand Giotto's work we cannot do better than study the "Divine Commedia," and "Vita Nuova."

In 1298, when Dante, aged three-and-thirty, had taken first rank among poets with his "Vita Nuova," and was prominent in Florence as a politician, Giotto received a commission from the Pope and went to Rome. As a testimonial to the Pope he had sent a circle drawn with one sweep of his hand and very perfect, without being mechanical, which gave use to the saying "Round as the O of Giotto." He seems to have been at Rome with Dante in the great year of Jubilee, 1300. In this year Dante was one of the priors of Florence, and Giotto, having been appointed to paint a picture of Paradise, in the chapel of the Town Hall, introduced among those worthy to be in heaven the face of his friend. Not long ago this portrait was discovered under the whitewash, but irreparably injured by bad restoration. The discoverer, a government official, carelessly injured the eye, and, to conceal what he had done, repainted the face, turning young features into old and haggard ones. Fortunately the original was secretly traced by a young Englishman, the late Baron Kirkup, whose sketch gives us the poet at the age of 35, half way to three-score and ten,—"In the midway of this our mortal life." He holds a book, probably the "Vita Nuova," under his left arm; and in his right he holds what I take to be a sprig of pomegranate with fruit and leaves. This is a symbol of Christ's suffering, as Mrs. Browning says—"Pomegranate, which, if cut deep down the middle shows a heart within, blood-tinctured." The face is strong and calm, and extraordinarily youthful, as yet unmarred by the world's rough usage. The long unending exile was to come, and with it the immortal story of man's progress from Hell through Purgatory to Paradise. Giotto, however, knew the spirit he was of. Dante had in him the making of a hero and a prophet of God; and Giotto, aware of it, left it on record in his portrait. E. I. F.

Voice-Training.

There are many calls in our day for change in educational methods. More science and less time devoted to the Greek and Roman classics in our great schools; more geography and better methods of teaching it. Not to specify further, we think a claim could be maintained for the education of the voice—a claim social, æsthetical, ecclesiastical, political, not to say commercial—the urgency of which would render the maintenance of it a duty to society easily acknowledged. A well-trained voice sweetens the intercourse of social conversation—a great blessing to confer on society. Imitation, the bond of society, carries on its effort after unifying to the utmost in voice and speech. The articulation, tone, pronunciation of parents, pastors, teachers, and esteemed associates are imitable. It is a duty on their part to offer for imitation a voice that is good, in order that their fond imitators may, in the matter of voice and speech, abhor that which is evil. The Rev. J. P. Sandlands, in his admirable book, *The Voice and Public Speaking*, says:—"With such a language as ours—rich, full, powerful as it is—we ought to be a nation of orators. Here, as it appears to me, we indicate a line of conduct the pursuit of which will give ample scope for a vast amount of patriotism. I do not think that a greater good can be effected than by enforcing attention to these things. It means power."

Let us assume it to be granted that the training of the voice is a duty; and now let us address ourselves to the kind of training required, and how it is to be carried on. The kind and method of training depend no doubt on the structure of the organ to be trained. But scientific knowledge of physiology and the anatomy of the voice has not been found to be of avail in the practical art of training the voice. It would be a strong thing to say that it was a waste of time to impart physiological and anatomical knowledge to students of the art of speaking. The acquirement of sound knowledge is never a waste of time. But in training the voice such knowledge is a detail that can be dispensed with while the best results are produced. A champion runner does not reach his athletic eminence by knowledge of the anatomy of his limbs.

The voice is produced by various organs which, as we have said, have functions of life to discharge before and above speaking. These are the lungs, the windpipe, the throat, the mouth. The lungs are the bellows of this wonderful organ, viewed as a wind instrument. For it is both a wind, a string, and a reed instrument. It is of the nature of all the sounding instruments, and is superior to each of them. We live by breathing, and we

must breathe wisely to speak well. Speaking is a use of the lungs which human beings have found out. The breathing to live is of the same nature as the function of the eye or the ear. The breathing to speak has to be learnt if speaking is to be done well. To manage the breath properly is the first requirement of the art of speaking. To compress and condense the air in the lungs, and then to force it straight at the vocal organ in the throat is to manage the breath properly. It is an artificial process. There is deep breathing, called diaphragmatic or abdominal breathing; there is broad or wide breathing, called rib breathing; and there is shallow breathing, called collar-bone breathing. The full explanation of breathing must be left for the instructor. Suffice it to say that deep breathing is the only possible breathing for true use of the voice. Sound must come without breath. Breath coming with the sound exhausts itself too soon, and it makes the sound harsh. You have only to try it to become conscious of how the tone is affected by it. Mr. Sandlands tells us of a very good hint he got on this point. Hold a lighted candle before your mouth while you are giving forth the sound. If the flame flickers there is breath with the sound. The flame will not flicker if there is only sound.

Stand at ease without restraint on throat, chest, or limbs while you are going through breathing gymnastics.

The next organ in order is the windpipe. It is merely mentioned in passing. For, though the windpipe and its tubes—the bronchial tubes—by which it coalesces with the lungs, are important factors in voice-production, we have next to no voluntary control over them. Such ailments as bronchitis and asthma remind us how much more habitually careful we ought to be of the windpipe and its nether tubes than any of us are while we are sound in healthy breathing. The best we can do for them to keep them in good vocal condition is to observe assiduously the habit of nostril breathing when not speaking.

Next in order upwards and outwards—that is, in the throat—is the distinctive organ of voice, the larynx, called by Behnke the voice-box. The larynx, while it is specially the organ of voice, is also, owing to its marvellous power of adjustment, peculiarly under the control of our wills. Voice, produced in the larynx and manipulated by the mouth and nose, reaches our ears as song or speech. It is with speech that we have to do in this article. Speech makes free and effective use of consonantal, aspirate, and guttural sounds which song will not tolerate. It does not require so free and open a passage for the breath as song; it is not confined to the notes of a scale. There is steadying of the vocal organ before we begin to sing which is not required for speech, and this explains why a stammerer in speech can sing without stammering. By steadying the vocal organ he prevents the stammer.

The larynx has been compared to a wind, a reed, and a stringed instrument. The comparison of it to a violin gave rise to the not very accurate phrase "vocal cords," as the name of the two cushions which are its most prominent features. But no string so short as those "vocal cords" could produce a musical bass note. In fact, the comparison of the larynx to any instrument which produces only musical tones is inadequate, to begin with. There is no instrument but the larynx which produces both song and speech; and as those comparisons view the larynx merely as a producer of musical sounds, we have no further concern with them at present. Besides, the voice can be trained for speech, elocution, and oratory without a knowledge of the physiology of the larynx. We have the power of adjusting the larynx; of varying the tension of its cords, cushions, or ligaments, as they have been variously called. We can do these things without scientific technical knowledge of how they are done, without any knowledge at all of vocal physiology; and it is the work of the trainer of the voice to teach his pupils—or her pupils, we may be allowed to say—how to do them.

It must be kept distinctly in view that all the confused discussions about register—Mr. Curwen's thick, thin, and small register, for example—have reference to the voice of song, not to the voice of speech. Mr. Behnke says: "A very babel of confusion exists on this important subject. . . . People talk of chest, medium, mixed, throat, falsetto, and head registers, and these terms being utterly unscientific—that is, being based on sensations and fancies instead of physiological facts—no one can give a clear and satisfactory definition of any one of them." It is exactly those "sensations and fancies" that the skilful

trainer of the voice for speech takes full advantage of. Even from Mr. Behnke's entirely musical point of view, the sensations and fancies can be profitably utilised—for training the song-voice, I mean. But Mr. Sandlands, who treats of the voice merely as a speaking instrument, says: "We often hear the expressions 'head-voice,' 'chest-voice,' 'throat-voice,' etc. . . . We must discard these terms." Now, these are very instructive terms. There is no doubt that, as he says, "we have but one organ of voice, and that is not in our head or chest, but in our throat." But it should not be overlooked that when certain tones are produced in that one organ of voice, which is in the throat, we have a sensation in the head or chest, as the case may be, which invariably attends those particular tones. There is an affection, feeling, sensation, or fancy of which the trainer of the voice avails himself.

For speaking purposes we all have four voices, and they are distinguished by the locality of an attendant sensation.

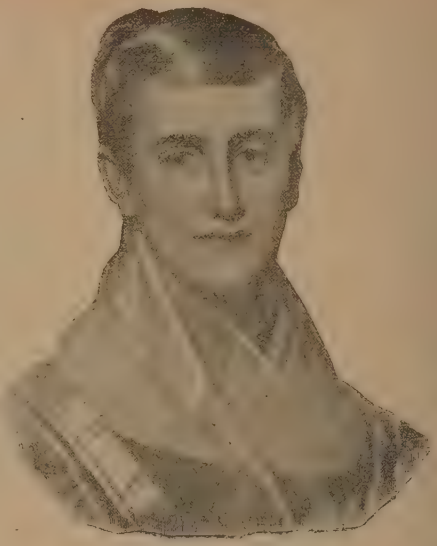
There is the upper head-voice and the lower-head-voice, the upper chest-voice and the lower chest-voice.

Now, in training the voice for speaking purposes, the first requisite is to get the ear to distinguish those four voices readily. The aim of the voice-trainer is to teach his pupils to have them at command as use requires in speech, reading, and reciting. It will readily be seen that the ear requires to be trained (simply by being made to listen) as we go on. In the rapid change from one "voice" to another flexibility is necessary—flexibility of the larynx, as rapid enunciation requires flexibility of the tongue.

To touch on the endless points necessary in the perfect training of a voice would overstep the possible length of this article. One voice has one defect, one another; and so upon the knowledge and perception of the trainer the correction rests.

If some interest has been raised in this too much neglected subject we should feel glad, and hope that all will remember they possess this finest of all instruments in their own throat; and if they have not the voice of an orator, at least they can make life more endurable for those around them by the true use of their voice.

Give something to somebody every day.



Prudence Crandall.

"AN UNEQUALLED WOMAN."

Amongst my most treasured books is a four-volume edition of "The Life and Times of William Lloyd Garrison," bearing on the front page this inscription: "With the grateful thanks of William Lloyd Garrison's favourite grand-daughter." It contains many noble, many thrilling chapters, but my favourite chapter of all is entitled "Prudence Crandall."

The work is dedicated appropriately to Samuel May, who freed the declining years of the great Liberator from toil and care, and whose nephew, Samuel I. May, Unitarian, of Syracuse, is assuredly one of our household heroes. But, whilst the great heroes of the anti-slavery cause are familiar names in our homes, there is one other name, and that of a heroine less known, which is certainly worthy to stand with Garrison and May.

Prudence Crandall sounds like a New England novel, but she was real flesh and fact, as you see her in the portrait. She was Prudence by name and prudence by nature, but her prudence had no dealings with self-interest and policy, for it was pledged to self-sacrifice and splendid bravery. Listen, then, to her story.

When Garrison was still young, both in years and in the slavery cause, he received a letter from a young Quakeress, asking his advice. She had bought a large house in Canterbury, started a boarding school for girls, and within two years it had flourished beyond her expectations. But she wished to change her white pupils for negroes, having "for some months past determined, if possible, during the remainder of my life to benefit the people of colour." On this resolute plan she asked his opinion, but she did not then disclose to him either the real reason of her resolution, nor the action she had already taken. She had already admitted to her school as a day pupil a negro woman, young and respectable, whose family she knew well; but this admission of Sarah Harris had given great offence. The wife of an Episcopal Clergyman in the town immediately remonstrated, and declared that if "that coloured girl" were retained the school would be ruined. Prudence Crandall retorted that it might sink, but she should not turn her out. Finding that many of her pupils would leave on this ground, she made up her mind not to give way, but to teach coloured girls exclusively.

Garrison approved this bold plan, and very soon after receiving her letter, drew attention in the *Liberator* to "the advertisement of Miss P. Crandall (a white lady), of Canterbury, Conn., for a High School for young coloured ladies." Canterbury went mad with indignation at this daring innovation! Three town's meetings were held in succession to devise ways and means for suppressing this resolution. A committee of gentlemen represented to her their opinion that she would bring the whole town to disgrace and ruin, and implored her to abandon her design. Prudence Crandall was simply immovable, and repeated her intention of carrying out the plan.

Hearing of her noble stand, Samuel I. May came to her aid, and wrote a brave note of encouragement. Although warned that he would incur personal danger if he publicly appeared as her friend, he promptly went over to Canterbury, where he found that she had been grossly insulted and threatened, and that a further town's meeting was to be held to adopt such measures as "would effectually avert the nuisance, or speedily abate it." Speeches of abuse were made by men of prominence, and when Samuel May asked to be heard in her defence, fists were doubled in his face, and he was not permitted to speak. The meeting voted unanimously its disapprobation of the school, and pledged the town to oppose it at all hazards.

Now the fray was set, and the fight soon became hot. The school opened with about twenty "nigger girls" from various parts. On the eve of the meeting, Garrison had written "Miss C. must be sustained at all hazards. Our brother May deserves much credit for venturing to expostulate with the conspirators. If any man can make them ashamed of their conduct, he is the man. May the Lord give him courage, wisdom, and success!" But Brother May was silenced by force. Later, Garrison writes again, "Wonderful woman! as undaunted as if she had the whole world on her side! She has opened the school, and is resolved to persevere." One of her friends wrote to Garrison: "We shall have a rough time, probably, before the year is out. The struggle will be great, no doubt, but God will redeem the captives. We are all determined to sustain Miss Crandall, if there is law in the land enough to protect her. She is a noble soul!"

But the law of the land was not to protect her, but be turned against her. An Act was procured from the State Legislature, prohibiting private schools for non-resident coloured persons, and providing for the expulsion of such pupils, and its passing was hailed with such wild rejoicing that her enemies rang the church bells! Under this Act, Prudence Crandall was twice arrested, tried, convicted, and imprisoned, but her case was carried to the Supreme Court, and her persecutors were defeated on a technical point. Pending the verdict, she was made subject to the most vindictive and inhuman persecution. Not a shop in the neighbourhood would sell her a morsel of food; the meeting houses closed their doors both to her and her pupils; no conveyance would take them as passengers; no doctor would attend the house. Her well was polluted, her doorstep besmeared, and finally her house was fired. Calumnious reports were printed and circulated, and all replies refused in the papers.

But Prudence Crandall held on and held her own until about midnight on September 9th, after two years' continuous persecution, the house

was assaulted by a band of roughs with heavy clubs and iron bars, who broke in and destroyed the windows, rendered part of the house useless, and greatly alarmed the pupils, who were afraid to remain another night. After due consideration it was determined that the school must be abandoned. The pupils were called together, and Mr. May was requested to announce to them the decision. "The words almost blistered my lips," he declared afterwards. "My bosom glowed with indignation. I felt ashamed of Canterbury, ashamed of Connecticut, ashamed of my country, ashamed of my colour." Thus ended the generous, disinterested, philanthropic, Christian enterprise of Prudence Crandall.

FRANK K. FREESTON.

News from the Field.

Sorrowfully we record the deaths of two of our ministers since our last issue. The *Rev. Thomas Carter* was a veteran worker, whose career was illumined throughout with high thinking and earnest service, and who at a ripe age has entered into his rest. A long life of work honourably ended! But, in mid-career, the *Rev. E. Solly Anthony* was suddenly called home while at his post of duty, and with every reasonable prospect of many years of service before him. His was a sweet and simple character, enriched by many spiritual graces, and his gentle nature will be sadly missed, not only in the darkened home, but in the church over which he presided, and in the large circle of friends who had enjoyed pleasant fellowship with him.

But as workers pass away workers also enter on the field. Among these we welcome *Mr. Short* to *Aberdare*, *Mr. Gordon Cooper* to the Assistant Ministry in *Essex Church, London*, *Mr. George Critchley* (who comes to us from the Congregationalists) to *Kentish Town, London*, *Mr. G. L. Fox* to *Devonport;* and we record with satisfaction the call of the *Rev. H. Gow* to the important charge at *Hampstead*.

There are, however, many vacant places yet, and good men and true are needed. We have reason to know that some of these are on their way to us.

Following the London meetings of the *British and Foreign Association*, a number of our provincial gatherings have been held, especially the *Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire*, the *Yorkshire Union*, the *Remonstrant Synod of Ulster*, the *Non-Subscribing Association* of Ireland, and the *Missionary Conference*. In all of these, especially those in England, there was a tone of hopefulness and encouragement, and there was less than usual of that morbid self-criticism, which comes sometimes like a dash of cold water over the spirits of those who are being kindled into enthusiasm. The *Missionary Conference* was more than usually alive, and seemed ready and eager to enter upon new fields of work, wherever the doors of opportunity were open. We are glad to see that there are to be services again in *Colwyn Bay*, and that other resorts of the people are to be provided with religious services.

The Colleges, *Oxford*, *Manchester* and *Carmarthen*, have had their field days, and told the story of their work. They are all well-manned with tutors, and *Oxford* at least has a goodly array of students; but *Manchester* has many vacant places, and *Carmarthen* has hardly a Unitarian student in its ranks. What is amiss? Can we not inspire our young men with a desire to enter the ministry? The word still is spoken, "Who will go for us?" Where are the men to say "Here am I, send me?"

It is only a step from our colleges to our *Willaston* School—will the step from *Willaston* to our colleges be taken by our sons? Speech Day has come and gone. There are not many sons of our ministers there. They cannot afford the luxury. When we remember the small stipends of our ministers, we see at once that only a select few can hope to avail themselves of such an institution. And then some are feeling that the lines upon which it is worked, in other respects, are not quite in harmony either with the intentions of the founder, or the thought of our Churches. But there can be no doubt the school is entering upon a career of prosperity, and is doing good educational work.

It is cheering to see how successfully *Mr. Webster* is prosecuting his appeal on behalf of the new Church at our northern outpost, *Aberdeen*. We wish him all success.

Kind friends have rallied round the old cause at *Chorley*. The Church has practically been restored, and the generosity of a few good men has given a new start to an old centre of light and leading.

A change of Editorship has taken place in the *Christian Life*. In a brief sentence, the Editor abruptly takes his leave, and there is no intimation as to any new occupant of the chair.

The *Inquirer* has sought on all sides recognition of its sixty years of services, and has obtained such a breeze of approval and good wishes as ought to carry it on a voyage of great prosperity. All hail to it as it enters the new waters.

It is pleasing to note that though we are in the midst of the holiday season, our various associations and churches are devising and laying out plans for work to be undertaken in the late autumn and early winter. The *Midland Christian Union* is proposing to inaugurate week-day services in all the churches of the Union, the *Manchester District Association* is to carry on its vigorous scheme of church visitation, and rumours of enlarged activity reach us from all parts of the Field.

There is a flutter of excitement among us as to the new *Hibbert Journal*, which is to make its appearance in October, and there is a general disposition to give it a cordial welcome. If wisely conducted it is likely to prove a valuable medium of theological and philosophical teachings. But why *Journal?* A quarterly magazine can hardly be a journal in either the strict or the popular sense of the word. We should have thought the *Hibbert Review* a more fitting title. SCRUTATOR.

July 16th, 1902.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

What is God?

Little children often ask "What is God?" and their parents like to hear them asking, for it shows that they are thinking about Him, the greatest and most joyful thing they can think about. Now, I wish you to understand at once that you can ask many questions which cannot be answered, and that, even if they could be answered, the answers would be of very little use in helping you to be good; *and it is how to be good that we are talking about just now, and nothing else.* I cannot tell you as fully and clearly about God as I can about Jesus, and the reason is quite plain. When Jesus lived in Galilee, men saw Him day after day, going about the roads and villages in His white tunic and with His calm, sweet face, always saying and doing kind things, and these men have written down what they heard and saw; but no one has ever seen God, as Jesus was seen, although good men have written much of the will of God, as it was made known to them.

And there is another reason why I cannot tell you all about our Heavenly Father, and it is this. He is so much greater than we are that it is impossible for us ever to understand all about Him, and we should not expect to do it. All good men say this of God, and the Bible teaches us so in the solemn words of Isaiah, when he speaks of God's thoughts as not our thoughts, nor our ways His ways, and that as the sky is higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts. And the most learned Paul, who was trained among the greatest religious teachers of his time, and who left them and became a follower of Jesus, in a long letter to the Christians in Rome, speaking of the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God, says that His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past tracing out. And again, in the Book of Job, after speaking of the sky and clouds, and light and darkness, the writer says that while these are the outer parts of God's ways, only a little portion is ever heard of Him. But, as I have said, while we cannot know everything about our Heavenly Father, *He has made known all that we need know to be good.*

When we read in the Bible of men having seen God it is that they have felt His presence, and have thought what He is like, for Spirit cannot be seen. I cannot, therefore, tell you what our Heavenly Father looks like, and that matters very little, for if I could tell you that He is bright as the sun, or white as the snow, it would not make you love and obey Him more, for you love and obey Him because He is your Heavenly Father who loves you and tells you what is right to do; not because He is bright or dazzling. Very few pictures have been drawn of God, and these have made Him like a great and glorious man; but all such pictures are false and foolish, and had better never have been drawn. You might as well draw the wind as a splendid winged horse, or fire as a fierce glittering dragon, which would not give you the least idea of what wind and fire really are. But I can tell you something of *what our Heavenly Father is, and does*, and that is far better than knowing whether He has a shape, or is bright as flame, or white as snow.

You have been told that the things which we really require to know in order to be good, are few and simple, and we should be very careful rightly to know these precious things, and ought not to be disappointed because there are questions about our Heavenly Father which no one can answer; for, while we might like to know them, as long as they do not hinder us from being good, we can be content to let them alone as things which we do not know, and do not need to know.

Children ask strange questions about other things than God, which cannot be answered, and which they must be content to leave unanswered. I have heard of them asking how many stars are in the sky, and no one can tell them. There is a white band across the heavens in which the stars are so thick that it is called the "milky way," a band, we believe, of sparkling worlds, but no one knows their number. Almost all little children ask "Who made God?" and they are quite right to ask, but nobody can tell them, and it is one of these things that they need not trouble themselves about, because whether they get an answer or do not get an answer has nothing to do with *how to be good*, which, you will remember, is the one thing we are speaking about. We see the stars in the blue sky at night, and with a telescope we can see more stars, and every larger telescope shows more stars, still farther and farther away, and men tell us of the laws by which they move in great circles, and we believe that there are stars beyond the farthest stars we see, and that they may have other and different laws to regulate them as they move in beautiful order. And while we know about our Heavenly Father from His presence within us, and from the world we see around us, yet we cannot tell what He is like, or what He does elsewhere, but we believe that He who is so good to us cannot be anything but good in all He does.

Little children ask who made the stars, and what they are made of, but we cannot tell. And though we cannot see the stars in the day time, we know that like spikes of silver they will tremble forth over the skies at night, and the Bible teaches us, and most wise men believe, that they were begun by our Heavenly Father, who is so great and good. And when children ask in the same curious way what God is like, and who made God, we cannot tell; but we can explain that we do not think God was ever "made" as children call it,

and that we do not need to know in order to be good, but that we do know from His presence within us, that our Heavenly Father *is* and that He is *good*, and that He tells us what to do, if we would be good also. And men believe what the Bible teaches, that God is the cause of all good in the world around us, as well as in ourselves.

You will remember, then, that there are very many wonders about other things than our Heavenly Father which cannot be explained, and that all you need know in order to be good is, *that God is*, that He makes His will known to you, and that He is the cause of all that is good in you and in the world around you.

Fairies in Faces.

I like to sit on daddy's knee,
And watch the fairy in his face,
That always has a smile for me,
And never wanders from her place.

And mother says the eyes of Joy
Will make a thousand faces shine,
When Love can spare each little boy
A father half so sweet as mine.

NORMAN GALE.

Going Forward.

Life begins always in the individual germ. See, we might say, how tenderly the Father of all seems to take His child by the hand, as it enters this strange path of life, and to lead it on, from slow first steps, to the wider and higher way! Helpless, speechless, in its pitiful impotence, the baby lies—dazzled by the glare of light, stunned by the rush of noises upon its undistinguishing ear—the most forlorn and pitiable of creatures. But in that frail casket is hid the precious germ that will ripen into so rich and vast a life! All things are given, as it were, for its instruction and help. As its sight steadies and strengthens, it reaches out for the universe as a plaything. It catches at the moon and stars, as if it would pull them from the sky in its baby grasp. All voices of human love and tenderness invite it forth; kind hands stronger than its own hold it up and lead it on. As a bird's nest, lined with softest down, screens the fledgling till it is ready to try its wings against the storm, so our atmosphere of soft indulgence broods about and nourishes the budding strength; the Divine love is echoed in the tones and reflected in the loving eyes that attend the frail unfolding life.

The first voluntary steps must take it out of that sweet Eden into a harsher air. The first conscious thought must break the charm of that blissful ignorance. The first awakening of conscience to a higher life will most likely be the wakening of remorse from the pungent aftertaste of some forbidden fruit. It is a long and weary way between the ignorant innocence of early morning and the solemn calm repose of the silent night. But when the shades of that night begin to gather, and the promised hour of rest beckons after the heat and burden of the day, then to most of us, I think, it will come as a grateful memory that we have been led by a Hand we knew not, in a path of which we were not aware, to an end that was peacefuller and better, if not more smiling and radiant, than our wish had planned it out. It is not then the delusion of self-flattery, it is grateful acknowledgment of a Power not ourselves that has wrought with us for righteousness. That Power—the law of the spirit of life in us—did not work blindly and vainly, but by a counsel and a wisdom better than our own. And we learn to think as gratefully of the Heavenly Father then, as we think tenderly now of the human love which broods so pitifully, so watchfully, over the new-born babe.

I say we may learn to think so. For it is not only a sentiment: it is also an attainment. It does not mean solution of the enigma of the universe; it does not mean explanation of the dark things in human life. It means fidelity in our own appointed work; it means patience in our own narrow way. It may be that our thoughts about the Infinite, and His ways toward us, are as vague, as dim, as unreal, as those of an infant respecting ours would be if it could put them into words. It may be that we have tried every theory of the universe which philosophers or pietists have framed, and have found them all alike to be less than nothing to us, and vanity.

But the religious life does not promise us the solution of the enigma of the universe; it does not promise us the interpretation of the mystery of our own lot. Its best fruit, very likely, will be not clear vision, and not triumphant faith: nothing better than that poor humble thing we call "the patience of hope." But then—"we are saved by hope;" and "hope maketh not ashamed!"

In our reading of the lessons of this life, I am not sure that we can get much beyond these simple words. Of course we can learn something—can learn much; and that learning is a joy, a privilege, and a delight. But all rests on mystery at bottom. A few steps, and we land in outer darkness. But see how it is in other things. The clearest-eyed science must be content to rest at last with the largest law that has yet been disclosed: call it gravitation, call it affinity, call it persistence of force—there is no accounting for any one of them. Just so it is with the submission of the religious mind to the highest law it knows of the inward life.